

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

One of a teacher's essential responsibilities is to identify what is important for students to learn and to design instruction that enables the students to achieve those learning goals. This planning is based on a deep understanding of content and knowledge about one's students—the students' knowledge and skills as well as their interests and cultural backgrounds.

Performance in this domain is demonstrated through the plans that teachers prepare to guide their teaching, their rationale for those plans, and the artifacts that the teacher creates for each activity or assignment (instructions, worksheets, etc.).

Teachers who excel in domain 1 prepare plans and artifacts that display one or more of the following characteristics:

- They contain learning outcomes and an instructional design (organization and presentation of content, design and sequence of activities, etc.) that reflect a deep understanding of the discipline and an understanding of how to guide students toward the desired learning outcomes.
- They make clear how the teacher plans to engage students in the content based on an understanding of students' backgrounds, interests, and skills.
- They present an instructional design that is coherent in its approach to topics, aligned with learning outcomes, and, where appropriate, aligned with the state's or district's curriculum standards.
- They describe sound assessment methods (both formative and summative) that are aligned with the learning outcomes and inform instruction.

Domain 1 Planning and Preparation

- a. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy**
 - Knowledge of Content and the Structure of the Discipline
 - Knowledge of Prerequisite Relationships
 - Knowledge of Content-Related Pedagogy
- b. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students**
 - Knowledge of Child and Adolescent Development
 - Knowledge of the Learning Process
 - Knowledge of Students' Skills, Knowledge, and Language Proficiency
 - Knowledge of Students' Interests and Cultural Heritage
 - Knowledge of Students' Special Needs
- c. Selecting Instructional Outcomes**
 - Value, Sequence, and Alignment
 - Clarity
 - Balance
 - Suitability for Diverse Learners
- d. Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources**
 - Resources for Classroom Use
 - Resources to Extend Content Knowledge and Pedagogy
 - Resources for Students
- e. Designing Coherent Instruction**
 - Learning Activities
 - Instructional Materials and Resources
 - Instructional Groups
 - Lesson and Unit Structure
- f. Designing Student Assessment**
 - Congruence with Instructional Outcomes
 - Criteria and Standards
 - Design of Formative Assessments

Domain 2: Classroom Environment

An ideal classroom is comfortable and respectful; it is a safe environment in which students feel free to take intellectual risks. A classroom that is highly conducive for learning also runs very smoothly; routines and procedures are efficient, and student behavior is cooperative so that the work in the classroom is focused on learning.

The components in this domain are not concerned with any particular content but with the conditions conducive to all learning. These skills are demonstrated in action in the classroom.

When a teacher is remembered by students years later, it is frequently for his or her skills in this domain. Teachers who excel in domain 2 display one or more of the following characteristics:

- They show that they care about their students and that they have high expectations for everyone's learning.
- They demonstrate excitement about the subject and a deep commitment to sharing their enthusiasm with their students.
- They communicate the importance of learning the content and invite students to learn with them.
- They create a culture in which students put forth effort and take pride in a job well done.
- They create a smoothly running classroom in which students move easily between different types of activities; they efficiently collect and distribute materials and take care of noninstructional duties.
- They establish clear standards of conduct to which students adhere with no conflict.

Domain 2 The Classroom Environment

- a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport**
 - Teacher Interaction with Students
 - Student Interactions with One Another
- b. Establishing a Culture for Learning**
 - Importance of the Content
 - Expectations for Learning and Achievement
 - Student Pride in Work
- c. Managing Classroom Procedures**
 - Management of Instructional Groups
 - Management of Transitions
 - Management of Materials And Supplies
 - Performance of Non-Instructional Duties
 - Supervision of Volunteers And Paraprofessionals
- d. Managing Student Behavior**
 - Expectations
 - Monitoring of Student Behavior
 - Response to Student Misbehavior
- e. Organizing Physical Space**
 - Safety and Accessibility
 - Arrangement of Furniture and Use of Physical Resources.

Classroom Observation: Domain 2 – Classroom Environment Look Fors

2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

In classrooms where there is a high level of respect and rapport, you may see:

- Talk between the teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful.
- The teacher makes connections with students.
- Students exhibit respect for the teacher.
- The teacher responds to disrespectful behavior among students.
- The teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about students' lives beyond school.
- When necessary, students correct one another in their conduct toward classmates.
- The teacher's response to a student's incorrect response respects the student's dignity.
- Greeting students when they first walk in the door, making eye contact, and smiling pleasantly
- Taking time for introductions at the beginning of the year
- Implementing a "get acquainted" activity on the first few days of school to allow students to establish their identities and make an initial contribution to the group
- Investing time in getting to know each student by talking with students about families, hobbies, and experiences
- Sharing personal experiences and life stories when appropriate
- Conferencing with students individually
- Listening to students' feelings, opinions, and ideas
- Exhibiting a sense of humor
- Modeling respectful behavior by listening to students, being consistent, and treating them equitably
- Balancing a clear sense of purpose and strong guidance of students with the ability to show concern for students' needs and opinions and function as a team

2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning

In classrooms where there is a high level of culture for learning, you may see:

- The teacher communicates the importance of learning and that with hard work all students can be successful learners.
- The teacher demonstrates a high regard for student abilities.
- The teacher expects student effort and recognizes it.
- Students put forth good effort to complete work of high quality.
- The teacher communicates a genuine passion for the subject
- Students indicate that they are not satisfied unless they have complete understanding.
- Student questions and comments indicate a desire to understand the content rather than, for example, simply learning a procedure for getting the correct answer.
- Students recognize the efforts of their classmates.
- Students take initiative in improving the quality of their work.
- Communicating to students that you believe they can and will be successful
- Implementing cooperative learning so that students can learn from each other and take on different leadership roles as well as ownership of their own learning
- Modeling active learning and investigation
- Encouraging and praising students for their hard work and the strategies they use in their work
- Recognizing student initiative in approaching school work
- Promoting student pride in work by publicly recognizing good work and superior effort

2c: Managing Classroom Procedures

In classrooms where there is a high level of managing routines and procedures, you may see:

- Students are productively engaged during small-group work.
- Transitions between large- and small-group activities are smooth.
- Routines for distribution and collection of materials and supplies work efficiently, and students may take some initiative to make them work well.
- Classroom routines function smoothly.
- Students take the initiative with their classmates to ensure that their time is used productively.
- Students themselves ensure that transitions and other routines are accomplished smoothly.
- Beginning the year by clearly explaining routines and procedures that students need to know right away, such as how to enter the room, where to sit, where to store one's personal belongings, how to get permission to use the restroom or drinking fountain, how to ask for help, what to bring to class, and how the class is dismissed at the end of the period
- Teaching students the routines (for example, doing a transition between small- and large-group activities) and practicing them
- Explaining how classroom materials and equipment should be handled and organized and where they are located or stored

2d: Managing Student Behavior

In classrooms where there is a high level of managing student behavior, you may see:

- Student behavior is entirely appropriate; there is no evidence of student misbehavior.
- The teacher monitors student behavior without speaking, just moving about the classroom.
- Students respectfully intervene with classmates as appropriate to ensure compliance with standards of conduct.
- Developing classroom standards of conduct and referring to them frequently (Students should have input into and ownership of these standards.)
- Using physical proximity to students to prevent misbehavior
- Using sticky notes or conferencing to address particular students privately
- Setting class structures that incentivize good behavior
- Asking students who are misbehaving to describe what they should be doing
- Determining the source of the misbehavior (i.e., whether misbehavior is linked to misunderstanding or boredom)
- Involving students in monitoring their own and others' behavior

Domain 3: Instruction

The components in domain 3 address how a teacher actually engages students with the content—the implementation of the plans designed in domain 1. At high levels of performance in this domain, a teacher encourages students to participate in a community of learners developing a deep understanding of important concepts.

Teachers who excel in this domain display one or more of the following characteristics:

- They engage students in learning experiences designed to promote understanding through rigorous intellectual activity.
- Their questions, explanations, and activities invite student thinking and extend student understanding.
- They help students make important connections by incorporating concepts from other parts of the curriculum into their explanations.
- They monitor student engagement and understanding and make needed adaptations.
- They shift easily from one approach to another when the situation demands it.

Domain 3 Instruction	
a. Communicating with Students	Expectations for Learning Directions and Procedures Explanations of Content Use of Oral and Written Language
b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Quality of Questions Discussion Techniques Student Participation
c. Engaging Students in Learning	Activities and Assignments Grouping of Students Instructional Materials and Resources Structure and Pacing
d. Using Assessment in Instruction	Assessment Criteria Monitoring of Student Learning Feedback to Students Student Self-Assessment and Monitoring of Progress
e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness	Lesson Adjustment Response to Students Persistence

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

The components in domain 4 identify professional skills and responsibilities that are not visible in the classroom but that are crucial for successful classroom teaching and for enhancing the profession of teaching overall. These activities include professional growth, participation in a professional community, and contributions made to the profession as a whole.

Domain 4 includes activities teachers undertake on their own for the benefit of their students. Domain 4 also includes teacher participation in communities of practice. Like other professionals, when teachers participate in a community of practice, they have the opportunity to extend their knowledge and skills as teachers and share their own experiences that will enhance the knowledge and skills of others. As a result of active participation by community members, the profession as a whole grows and learns and all members benefit.

Teachers who excel in this domain display one or more of the following characteristics:

- They reflect on their practice to understand how their teaching can be improved.
- They engage in professional learning to strengthen their practice.
- They serve students' interests and those of the larger community.
- They are in frequent contact, as appropriate, with the families of the students they teach.
- They are active in professional communities, in the school, and in the district.
- They go beyond the technical requirements of their jobs and contribute to the general well-being of the schools of which they are a part.

Domain 4 Professional Responsibilities	
a. Reflecting on Teaching	Accuracy Use in Future Teaching
b. Maintaining Accurate Records	Student Completion of Assignments Student Progress in Learning Non-instructional Records
c. Communicating with Families	Information About the Instructional Program Information About Individual Students Engagement of Families in the Instructional Program
d. Participating in a Professional Community	Relationships with Colleagues Involvement in a Culture of Professional Inquiry Service to the School Participation in School and District Projects
e. Growing and Developing Professionally	Enhancement of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Skill Receptivity to Feedback from Colleagues Service to the Profession
f. Demonstrating Professionalism	Integrity And Ethical Conduct Service To Students Advocacy Decision Making

Classroom Observation: Domain 3 – Instruction Look Fors

3a: Communicating with Students

In classrooms where there is a high level of communicating with students, you may see:

- The teacher states clearly, at some point during the lesson, what the students are learning.
- If appropriate, the teacher models the process to be followed in the task.
- Students engage with the learning task, indicating that they understand what they are to do.
- The teacher makes no content errors; all students seem to understand the presentation.
- The teacher explains content clearly, using metaphors and analogies to bring content to life.
- The teacher points out possible areas for misunderstanding.
- The teacher invites students to explain the content to the class or to a small group of classmates.
- Vocabulary and usage are correct and suited to the lesson.
- Vocabulary is appropriate to students' ages and levels of development.
- The teacher uses rich language and offers brief vocabulary lessons where appropriate.
- Explain directions in more than one way to accommodate different learners
- Conference with students who might need further explanation of content or directions
- After explaining directions or content, ask students to restate the main ideas to their classmates
- Point out possible areas for misunderstanding
- Relate content to student interests or use analogies/metaphors to help students understand the content

3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

In classrooms where there is a high level of using questioning and discussion techniques, you will see:

- The teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or offer multiple possible answers.
- The teacher makes effective use of wait time.
- Students initiate higher-order questions.
- The teacher effectively builds on and uses student responses to questions.
- The teacher allows for discussions that enable students to talk to one another without ongoing mediation by the teacher.
- The teacher calls on most students, even those who don't initially volunteer.
- Many students actively engage in discussion.
- Students extend the discussion, enriching it.
- Students invite comments from their classmates during a discussion.
- Calling on students who do not have their hands raised
- Posing questions to which you (the teacher) do not know the answer
- Making effective use of wait time
- Asking students to comment on each other's responses to questions and answer each other's questions
- Asking a question and asking every student to write a brief response and share it with a partner
- Inviting a few students to offer their ideas to the entire class
- Asking questions that elicit inferences
- Asking higher-level analytic questions that require students to evaluate and critique information
- Asking questions to have students summarize their thinking

3c: Engaging Students in Learning

In classrooms where there is a high level of engaging students in learning, you may see:

- Virtually all students are highly engaged in the lesson.
- Learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or demand higher-order thinking.
- Students take initiative to modify a learning task to make it more meaningful or relevant to their needs.
- Students have choice in how they complete tasks.
- There is a mix of different types of groupings that are suitable to the lesson objectives or student needs.
- Students suggest modifications to the grouping patterns used.
- Materials and resources support the learning goals and require intellectual engagement as appropriate.
- Students suggest modifications or additions to the materials being used.
- The pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.
- Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.
- Implementing inquiry-based lessons so that students make connections to previous knowledge, bring their own questions to learning, and design ways to investigate their own questions
- Using non-linguistic representations such as graphic organizers, pictures or pictographs, mental images, physical models, and activities that involve physical movement

3d: Using Assessment in Instruction

In classrooms where there is a high level of using assessment in instruction, you may see:

- Students indicate that they clearly understand the characteristics of high-quality work.
- There is evidence that students have helped establish the evaluation criteria.
- Teacher monitoring of student understanding is sophisticated and continuous; the teacher is constantly taking the pulse of the class.
- The teacher makes use of strategies to elicit information about individual student understanding.
- Feedback to students is provided from many different sources, including other students.
- Feedback includes specific and timely guidance on how students can improve their performance.
- Students monitor their own understanding, either on their own initiative or as a result of tasks set by the teacher.
- The teacher's adjustments to the lesson are designed to assist individual students.
- Having students contribute to or define the assessment criteria
- Using exit tickets to monitor student learning at the end of a lesson
- Encouraging self-assessment of student work
- Encouraging peer assessment of student work
- Conducting error analysis to uncover misconceptions
- Making mid-course corrections based on assessment data
- Using a teachable moment to correct a misconception
- Keeping appropriately detailed records of student learning
- Helping students document and monitor their learning over time through portfolios and learning logs